DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 147 SP 037 791

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TITLE Developing Personal and Professional Identity: Teaming, Dialogue, and Inquiry in the Sophomore Professional Field Experience.

PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; College School Cooperation; *College Sophomores; Cooperating Teachers; *Discussion (Teaching Technique); Elementary Secondary Education; Feedback; *Field Experience Programs; Group Discussion; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Student Teachers; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

This paper examines a model of supervision/field experience proposed for teacher candidates in the sophomore professional experience of a teacher preparation program. The approach envisions the sophomore experience as a dialogic process in which students and teachers construct knowledge and nurture dispositions needed for development of personal and professional identities. The model of reflective supervision involves integration of research literature and of theory-in-practice; framing and reframing of the activity; reflection (journaling, dialogue, and inquiry); self-regulation; and construction of knowledge. The sophomore experience group included 24 teacher candidates who participated in weekly college-based instruction. Reflection, dialogue, inquiry, and use of collaborative teams were introduced into the course. The supervisory team included one university faculty member, an ethnographer, and the classroom teacher. Four teacher candidates (two dyads) who were placed in two kindergarten classrooms were the study participants. Participants completed the five steps of the model. Data sources included their semester's journals, classroom discussions, dialogues, communications, and debriefing sessions among teacher candidates, faculty, and cooperating teachers. Results found that teamwork benefitted the faculty, teachers, teather candidates, and pupils. (Contains 11 references.) (SM)

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Running Head: Personal and Professional Identity

Developing Personal and Professional Identity: Teaming, Dialogue and Inquiry in the Sophomore Professional Field Experience[1]

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[1] The research described herein is supported in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the US Department of Education through a grant to the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) at the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education(CRHDE). The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of the supporting agencies, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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Abstract

This article examines one model of supervision as applied to teacher candidates in the sophomore professional experience of a teacher preparation program. This approach envisions the sophomore professional development as a process involving dialogue and conversation, in which the teacher candidates and professor clarify concepts and focus on the personal and emerging professional development of the teacher candidate. This article describes the elements of the model of supervision and presents multiple cases that exemplify the model. The article ends with a brief discussion of the findings and their implications.

Quality teacher education programs are characterized by their ability to provide opportunities for students to connect college classroom learning and school practice. This is true of the clinical field experiences, particularly the junior practicum and the culminating teaching practice experience. As teacher educators strive to develop coherence across the program, from the first through the senior year, there is emphasis on enhancing the sophomore or second year field experience. While the goal is to integrate theory and practice, the field experience sets out to teach students how to reflect on their personal and professional identities through teaming, dialogue, the critical analysis of their perceptions, problem solving and decision making.

Traditionally, this experience was conceptualized as an academic course called Analysis of Classroom Behaviors, where students prepared and rehearsed for teaching. Teacher candidates meet for two hours per week in class on campus and two hours per week in a school classroom at the grade level of their choice. The on-campus sessions were textbook based with weekly reading assignments and discussion of case studies related to classroom management. At the schools, teacher candidates observed, tutored small groups of students on projects assigned by the host teachers and were required to prepare for and to teach two class lessons.

A close analysis of this course revealed that both course-content and practice needed revision based on current advances in education and different philosophical grounding. Missing from the course was its declared intent: to serve as a foundation for

other field experiences and as a basis for continuing learning and development. In revising the course our objectives were: first, to move towards establishing a coherent program of field based experiences; and second, to establish comprehensive change in goals, content and pedagogy based on the changing knowledge base of teaching and learning (The Holmes Group, 1995). This article describes and examines the meaning of a model of supervision/field experience proposed by Titone, Sherman and Palmer (in press) for teacher candidates in the sophomore experience. This approach envisions the sophomore experience as a dialogic process in which student and teacher construct knowledge and nurture dispositions needed for development of their personal and professional identities. In the second section, this article presents a multiple case study that exemplifies the model. The article ends with a brief discussion of the findings and their implications.

Theoretical Framework

Teacher candidates enter the sophomore professional field experience upon completion of their initial induction into the teacher education program. From this experience, we assume that they bring some understanding of the theoretical content as well as a rudimentary understanding of school routines. We also assume that the teacher candidates form a diverse group in terms of their prior professional experiences with teaching and learning and that these experiences have contributed to their developing personal and professional identities and commitment to a career. This

perspective is framed by problem-posing education (Freire, 1975), constructivism (Dewey, 1933), reflective thinking and dialogue (Schon, 1987) critical social theory and literature on transformational teaching and learning (McLaren, 1996), cognitive and psychosocial development across the life span (Resnick, 1996).

Freire (1975) proposed problem-posing education as liberating education that "consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (p.53). He stated that through dialogue,

> The teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and new terms emerge: teacher-student and students-teachers. In this dialogic community, the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches but the one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students who in their turn while learning to teach also teach. (p.53).

Dewey (1933) proposed in constructivism that learning is situated and is socially constructed. He, too, emphasized that communication is essential. One salient characteristic of the construction and advancement of knowledge is the reflective process which includes conversation/discussion, dialogue and inquiry (Schon, 1987). This work resonates in the submission of Pourdavood and Fleener (1997), who differentiate between discussion and dialogue. They submit that while these complement each other, they are different:

> In a discussion, different views are presented and sometimes defended; the aim is to reach a decision or a course of action. On the other hand, a dialogue does not seek agreement, rather views are presented as a way of discovering and/or reinventing new views. Consensus is not required in dialogue. (p.52)

Context and content give meaning to communication. Critical social theorists, sensitive to the contexts of human interaction and the power relationship (Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 1996), posit that schools are a part of a wider societal process and they do not exist apart from people's beliefs and values. They argue that beliefs and values are constructed and reconstructed across the life span and that they buttress an individual's role perception. This understanding informs program design for teacher candidates as they shape their personal and professional identities.

In the sophomore field experience, students learn about learning and teaching. We argue that if students become conscious of how they as young adults learn, they can confront and reconstruct beliefs about teaching and learning. In addition, we further framed our work in andragogy - the science of teaching adults (Knowles, 1984). We acknowledge that adults' learning style preference is not always self directed even when they are extremely goal oriented and concerned about career advancement (Barkley, 1985, Unpublished dissertation). The range of applicants for the teaching profession today requires a sensitivity to the learning styles of young adults and the teaching approaches that should be adopted. This broad theoretical

framework shaped the design of this extension of the model as well as the procedures for the implementation of the sophomore experience.

The Model of Reflective Supervision
Emerging Meaning for the Sophomore Professional Field Experience

Phase 1 - Integration. Integration at this level has multiple meanings: first, the integration of research literature as represented in theoretical, conceptual and applied research into their schema; second, theory-in-practice -- the analysis of the socio-cultural-political classroom context with a well understood theoretical frame; and third, an understanding of the emergence of their own personal and professional identities. This phase must be characterized by study of challenging academic content and action - purposeful classroom visits with focused interactions.

To foster this integration, multiple levels and types of communication are necessary. Guided discussions among teacher candidates and faculty and cooperating teachers, informal meetings and course review are among the essential communication methods. These are the foundation for problem solving, creativity and knowledge construction.

This phase focuses on the individual -- integration of personal self and professional self. With guidance from the professor, teacher candidates develop the conversational skills which enable them to delve further into their experiences and become more aware of the influences that shape their thinking and the theories behind

their perceptions (Henderson,1992). In addition, emphasis on group processes and teaming enables pre-service teachers and faculty to learn from one another.

Phase 2 - Framing and Reframing the Activity. The range of activities and the dynamic of the classroom pose a major dilemma for the uninitiated. Teams (dyads, or triads) work together to address the analysis of complex classroom interactions, through observation, study and dialog. Fixed category observation systems and event analysis are recommended. Teacher candidates must be readied to approach this task knowing that careful minute observations inform perception, judgments and understandings. Integrated into this section is the concept of collaborative task design, another significant dimension of teaming. This sets up the linkages across faculty, across dyads and prepares applicants to work to validate inferences made. It also offers depth to the curriculum frame.

Phase 3 - Reflection: Journaling, Dialogue and Inquiry. The two prior phases provide the raw materials for the concept and practice of reflection. Constant communication among faculty and teachers is necessary in order to agree upon a definition of reflection and maintain a collaborative stance. To foster reflection, faculty and teachers model in the process of observation and reflection, journaling and inquiry. The modeling itself is a form of coaching to guide applicants to evaluate the routines and methods they observe in their field experiences. Emphasis is extended to the group process as the basis of their collaborative inquiry.

Phase 4 - Self Regulation. The self-directed learner initiates and directs his/her own learning, using the cognitive, metacognitive and motivational components of learning to understand context and construct meaning. In this phase, teacher candidates are guided to integrate the meaning, values and beliefs drawn from their experience. Collaborative Task design, dialog, reflection and inquiry are used to teach students how to initiate, monitor, and evaluate their learning and understand their motivational orientation. This self conscious awareness and understanding fuels further inquiry, and conceptual change.

Phase 5 - Construction of Knowledge. In this phase, teacher candidates move beyond their decision points to active participation in their own ways of knowing and understanding. Flexibility and thoughtfulness in the social construction of knowledge are the salient characteristics of this phase. Faculty and cooperating teachers work collaboratively with teacher candidates as they construct knowledge so as to gain an understanding of teacher candidates' perspectives, understandings and misunderstandings, challenge their thinking and reanalyze perspectives, and to refresh their own teaching. While the teacher candidates are actively constructing knowledge, the role of the university professor shifts from that of lecturer to facilitator of group process.

The Sophomore Group

Twenty-four teacher candidates (21 females and 3 males) composed the group for the sophomore experience. Included in this group were transfer students: 2 freshmen and 4 juniors. As such, it consisted of weekly college-based instruction. Reflection, specifically dialogue, inquiry, and the use of collaborative teams dyads/triads were introduced into this course. The supervisory team included one faculty member, an ethnographer and the classroom teacher/s. This new partnership was established to support the knowledge and inquiry goals.

Four teacher candidates (two dyads) whose placements were in two kindergarten classrooms volunteered to participate in this study. They provided their semester's journal entries as data sources. Other data sources included documentation of classroom discussions, dialogues and communications and debriefing sessions among teacher candidates, faculty and cooperating teachers.

Case Study 1

Integration. Alpha Team: Jerome a 22 year-old white male and Ellen, a 22 year-old, white female, two teacher candidates who had had no prior teaching experience were keen participants in the college-based classes. These classes focused on teacher and student behaviors, integrated developmental psychology, participant observer skills, instructional design for microteaching and learning centers. They relied on the ethnographer and the professor to guide their skill development in their

participant observation. They were assigned to Classroom Alpha, a full day kindergarten with a teacher, Wilsonia and a full time aide, Margaret.

As the college classes developed, the quality of their participation changed to include information from their observations: the physical characteristics of the classroom, the characteristics of the teacher, aide and students as well as the classroom routines. They offered their evaluations, judgments and feelings towards their experiences from their journals. They requested additional information to clarify the contradictions and discrepancies that confronted them; they were concerned about the perceived anger and lack of coordination and collaboration between the teacher and the aide.

So in the college group conversations, they tested their own understanding, clarified their judgment and redirected their observations and hypotheses with the professor as the guide. They acknowledged that the class directed discussion provided them with a basic routine that they could custom make for themselves.

Jerome and Ellen viewed themselves as a team and set norms to govern their site visits, they helped each other in their class preparation and in coordinating their findings at the site. The lack of coordination between the teacher and aide posed a major challenge for them.

Framing and Reframing the task. After three weeks of reflections based on their journal writing, their reflection and group dialogue, Jerome and Ellen were able to

present to the group, the foci of their participant observation: first, using learning centers as an extension of regular classwork and second, the collaboration between the teacher and aide and its contribution to classroom climate. After another round of class and observation, Jerome and Ellen formulated two related questions: How do the teacher and aide work together to facilitate student learning process?

Reflection: Journaling, Dialogue and Inquiry. Jerome and Ellen kept individual journals and shared their writings in the discussions and dialogues as they had seen modeled by both the faculty and the ethnographer. While their initial journaling focused on descriptions of contexts and events, once their guiding question was formulated, their entries became more focused. They spent time with the ethnographer and their professor clarifying their observations and insights. In addition, they began first to ground their analysis and initial findings in the theoretical work of the class; and second to use this information to design their teaching and learning centers.

Self regulation. Jerome and Ellen shared their findings with the class and then in more detail, with Judy and Willa, who were working in another kindergarten class. Their findings indicated that teacher and aide, with little or no communication between them, had adopted specific roles in the classroom: the former, as academic coach and the latter as strict disciplinarian or enforcer. Jerome and Ellen had to confront their own roles as well as their communication with the teacher, aide and the students. Jerome,

Ellen, Judy and Willa met with the professor and the ethnographer met again outside class time to decide on a course of action. The discussion focused on classroom culture, authority in the classroom, role of the teacher, the goal of the field experiences and the politics of teaching. The two teams decided to proceed with their activities in order to test their new strategies. In addition, they asked to switch kindergarten classes and to meet outside regular classes to help each other. This awareness and understanding of their learning fueled further questioning and information seeking beyond the class parameters.

Construction of Knowledge Jerome and Ellen agreed that they had come to some decision points for action related to classroom practice and individual identity. They both indicated that:

- teaming can be developed to sustain teacher candidates in the field experience;
- dialogue and inquiry facilitate self directed learning;
- the behaviors of adults in the classroom influences students' learning
- teaching is a complex activity; the classroom is a complex environment that must sustain student learning.

Case Study 2

Integration The Beta team consisted of two non-traditional students, Judy and Willa. They worked with classroom teacher, Regina and aide, Rita. Judy a 27 year

old, was married and a parent. Willa, who was also married, had come to the program following a brief career in the business world. At the beginning of the experience, Willa harbored serious concerns about her ability to succeed as an educator of young children. They shared their experiences with the group; this added another dimension to the group discussions.

Judy and Willa had worked together in other classes, so they were able to strengthen their earlier friendship bonds and academic collaboration. For the sophomore group, they were models of work, study and conversation.

Framing and Reframing the Activity Judy and Willa initially focused on three sequences or levels: the physical aspects of the classroom, the social patterns, and the basic values beliefs and concepts of the interactions. Willa indicated her interest in teacher-aide collaboration. She stated:

> They worked well. . .The aide has such great rapport with kids. Collaboration is going to happen more and more because of inclusion. . .so you will have two teachers sharing the same space sharing the same kids, hopefully sharing the same content. . . Team teaching is coming. (Willa's journal)

After much discussion, they agreed upon their guiding question: How can we together develop collaborative behaviors in the classroom similar to those modeled to us by the teacher and the aide?

Reflection: Journaling, Dialogue and Collaborative Inquiry. Judy and Willa recorded their observations in their journals. They brought their entries back to the collaborative group. Their entries and discussions focused on the hospitality and welcoming environment created by their two positive role models -- "student's work is up all over [the classroom] indicating that you are proud of the child;" and the welcoming extended to them by the students.

During the following collaborative group session, at which time both the Alpha and Beta teams shared their observations and reflections from their journals, they agreed to switch kindergarten classrooms for the next site based observation in order to validate each others' findings. They were very sensitive to the lack of communication in the second room where "the teacher was very stern; students were solemn. Classes involved much repetition."

At the subsequent meeting, they discussed the authority structure of the classrooms and explored meanings for them as emerging professionals. Participation in the dialog moved to an in-depth level of understanding of the school culture. During their discussions, they constantly invited the ethnographer to help them understand their analysis and interpretation of their materials. This interaction helped to further clarify their framing of their question.

Self-Regulation. Judy and Willa used their information to help them focus more on their personal and professional identities. They chose to explore the power of

teacher personality, the environment of the classroom and their role in creating a place for learning. They paired with Team Alpha to switch observation sites. They initiated this discussion with faculty and cooperating teachers and ventured to engage the students, the aide and their cooperating teachers about their life histories and about classroom practice.

Construction of Knowledge. Judy and Willa indicated that they learned the skills of observation, and their microunits were successful. They indicated that for the first time they understood the role of the teacher's personality, and the skill and investment of self in creating the learning environment. They both set out to gather more information on these issues, but more particularly to seek out their cooperating teacher as their continuing role model.

The perspectives of the faculty and the classroom teachers

The dynamic of this model brought reactions from all personnel involved in the project. The college professor in his exit interview indicated that, "this class will never be the same; I am not the same. . . there is a pedagogical value in conversation". He acknowledged that teaming with the ethnographer provided depth and added dimension to the content and the pedagogy of the class. He indicated that a role shift occurred for him across the development of the class: from lecturer and teacher to facilitator and teacher-learner through dialog. He further acknowledged that ensuring the cooperating teacher a voice in the continuing communication qualitatively enriched

the experience for the teacher candidates and reinforced the model and approach; teachers were able to express their own needs and suggestions for improvement.

The cooperating teachers provided insight into their own participation through their interviews. Wilsonia indicated that teaming provided support and multiple feedback opportunities for the teacher candidates and all other team members; they were able to identify change and improvements in teacher candidates tutoring students, lesson preparation plans and in their teaching. Both teachers supported observation across different classrooms emphasizing that students' need to understand the uniqueness of each classroom and the teacher's multiple roles and the socio-cultural context. In addition, Regina persuasively challenged the teacher candidates to focus on their role identity when she shared the following with them:

> Sometimes. . .children have so much baggage. . . some are homeless, some children are living with grandparents, they have a parent who is incarcerated. . . in the classroom, your role changes, you're not just a teacher, for some students, you are like their mom, because they will call you mom, they need a hug. You you have to be like a doctor, or the nurse, you change hats a lot..

Regina continually urged the teacher participants to aim for an integrated personal and professional identity; she demonstrated throughout her interactions in the classroom, how she invested herself in the development of her students and urged the teacher

participants to do the same. In fact, she and Mrs. Wilson reinforced the importance of cultivating dispositions

Discussion

This documentation has brought two major issues and challenges to the fore. Team teaching is an approach that was popularized with the middle schools movement. Its benefits today across K-16 are evident. In this study, teaming benefited the faculty, teachers, teacher candidates and students. Nevertheless, college faculty and teachers are often not afforded such opportunities. Further, when opportunities present themselves, there can be problems, as in the case of the teacher and aide in one of the classes. Forming teams do not alone make them efficient; dialogue, purpose, norms and reflection guide and support the process of successful teaming. Faculty of the professional education unit must be provided continuing professional development opportunities in this area.

A related issue is the allocation of resources. The teaming of the faculty and the ethnographer was made possible through the financial support from a professional development grant. Teaming might be considered as a viable alternative to providing special needs in the field experience, in inclusion classrooms and in addressing the needs of young children or children placed at risk for academic success .

The final issue relates to the coherence of the clinical field experiences. Change in this direction is happening on many fronts including curriculum, pedagogy, and

resource allocation. As we replicate the model to test its usability and effectiveness, we also must develop a process to assess comprehensively the achievement and the continuing performance of the teacher candidates. The range of alternative assessments will provide the basis of these actions.

Teacher Applicant Update

It is now two semesters since the teacher candidates have completed their sophomore experience; they are now preparing other field placements. While the program advocates that students complete their professional field experiences in multiple contexts, Judy is returning to do her student teaching with her cooperating teacher; she is committed to teaching in an urban setting and that she wants Regina to be her mentor. Willa has become a confident emerging professional; she has requested a placement that offers a broad multicultural environment. Jerome and Ellen, satisfied that this site challenged them to confront the politics of the classroom, are anticipating their next field experience.

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